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8 June 1978

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MEMORANDUM FOR:  National Intelligence Officer  
for China

FROM : Director of Geographic and Cartographic Research

SUBJECT : Review of Senate Draft Study on Intelligence  
Concerning China

1. We have reviewed the Senate staff study and in general find it a useful evaluation of the state of Community intelligence efforts on China. Several helpful observations are made, some primary weaknesses in the intelligence process are identified, and most of the recommendations, though hardly startling, deserve careful consideration. On the other hand, the report is overlong and rambling and, in places, internally inconsistent; the selective historical tidbits about who said what and when add little to the study; and some of the recommendations appear to suggest major bureaucratic reorganizations far beyond the scope of the study or the ability of the Select Committee to implement.

2. Two criticisms made in the staff study and the corollaries drawn seem particularly useful for follow-up action, namely, the points that (1) too much effort in the past has been spent on the details of Chinese internal politics, and (2) overemphasis on the collection of intelligence and analysis of the Chinese military threat. We support suggestions that in political reporting and analysis more attention can usefully be put on the constraints that will face the Chinese leadership, regardless of which particular faction assumes or has power, and that greater priority be accorded to the collection and analysis of nonmilitary topics. Our view, however, is that only minor changes in emphasis are needed rather than major program shifts. We also agree generally with most of the points made in the section on the management of the intelligence effort on China (pp. 10-14). From the viewpoint of OGCR, and the location of our analytic units in Rosslyn, the NIO system has improved our contacts and communications with other intelligence producers and the policymakers. But we also feel additional improvements in the system are possible that would enhance our ability to mesh our work and priorities with other

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New and Changing Problems (pp. 43-45): Some very useful points are made here concerning past and present directions in China research. The list of examples of changing circumstances and problems is a good one and includes areas where present and future OGCR contributions are being and can be made.

Recommendations (pp. 51-54): We can support most of the recommendations, though we have some reservations and additional thoughts for your consideration. For example, the first two recommendations concerning strengthening NSA and DIA contributions are laudable, though the level of expectations for success appears to be at the lower end of the scale. In particular, changing DIA in regards to its civilian-military structure would require a major bureaucratic upheaval -- and we are not convinced the results would necessarily justify the changes.

The more emphasis on overseas experience is a recommendation made frequently; we support it but with the observation that a good analyst can sharpen his perspectives by overseas experience, but that some type of automatic overseas duty for all analysts will not in itself improve the quality of analysis. We have found valuable the problem-oriented TDY as a means to acquire a better understanding of foreign areas and culture. Another possibility is an orientation tour of short duration with the individual integrated within the DDO station.

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The recommendation of greater use of the low-grade intelligence ore is one that OGCR analysts find comforting inasmuch as this has been one research avenue frequently used by our analysts. The problems of indexing materials (manpower and machines) still remain and must be overcome before this lode can be fully exploited.

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We are receptive to the recommendation that nonmilitary intelligence targets be given fuller coverage and analytical exploitation, especially by [redacted]. There are major problems with implementing the recommendation and it would require considerable effort by managers, collectors, and analysts to establish strategies and priorities.

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Annex: Intelligence Community Specialists on China  
(p. 55): We find the list and lack of definitions troubling mainly because of possible assumptions about analytical strength. Undoubtedly all of the [redacted] are engaged in some way in "China duties," but the China analysts who write the memoranda and reports, brief officials, and so on is much, much, smaller. In NFAC, for example, there are [redacted] China specialists listed, but China analysts probably are less than half this number.

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